



Department of Conservation

Bureau of Parks and Lands Maine Forest Service
Maine Geological Survey and Natural Areas Program
Land Use Regulation Commission

Media Advisory

Please deliver to the city or assignment editor

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Forest Service Calls for Biomass Project Applications

AUGUSTA, Maine – The Maine Forest Service, under the Maine Department of Conservation, is requesting applications for biomass heat and energy installation projects for funding through federal recovery-act monies.

Some 15 shovel-ready projects from public institutions, including schools, hospitals, and state, county, local and tribal government agencies, will be funded with \$11.4 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds received by the state of Maine.

In August, Gov. John E. Baldacci announced the funding, which not only will support the wood-to-energy heating or energy installations, but also is expected to create and retain about 200 jobs throughout the state.

“I have seen firsthand how a wood-to-energy project can benefit a public school building, and I know this important federal grant will help us expand and diversify our forest-products industry,” Gov. Baldacci said Thursday. “These projects will show how Maine is the leader in renewable energy, and they also will make the state much less dependent on foreign oil.”

“Maine’s 17 million acres of forest are the solution to most of the state’s energy issues, and the funding of these 15 projects will prove that -- not only to Maine people, but also to the nation,” Commissioner Patrick K. McGowan of the Maine Department of Conservation said. “These projects will create new ‘green’ jobs and start the new ‘green economy’ across Maine and the U.S.”

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) is providing the state of Maine with economic stimulus funds for job creation and renewable energy. The Maine Department of Conservation (MDOC) has been designated by the USDA Forest Service to receive that portion

of funding for which Maine is eligible.

These are one-time funds that will be spent or committed within two years. Working in conjunction with the Office of the Governor, the Maine State Legislature, and the US Forest Service – Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry, the MDOC has determined that it will use the ARRA funding for contracts to support new and far-reaching programs to convert public facilities in Maine to wood heat.

Through the fuel conversion process, the ARRA funding will create and support jobs among licensed solid wood-fuel professionals, contractors and engineering firms. The use of the recovery funds also is expected to benefit loggers and other forest-product professionals.

Maine's forest industry has a significant impact on the state's economy. The ARRA funding is expected to promote wood-to-energy (biomass) activities to also help achieve a national goal of healthy, sustainable forests, state officials said.

The promotion of sustainable management of Maine forest land and the use of certified products also will be key to the funded projects, according to Maine Forest Service officials.

The biomass project applications must be submitted by Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, and the awards will be announced as soon as possible, according to state officials. The proposals must come from public institutions, rather than vendors, and must meet two basic criteria: the wood-to-energy projects must be shovel ready, and they must create or retain jobs.

The projects can be either "standard projects," which are smaller conversions to wood-based systems, such as a small pellet burner or furnace or an appropriately sized wood pellet stove less than 200,000 BTUs; or they can be "custom projects," larger systems in excess of 200,000 BTUs that serve larger facilities or several buildings, such as several dormitories on a college campus.

The request for applications (RFA) is available online at: <http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/arra>

Or contact Jennifer Wright, Maine Forest Service, at jennifer.wright@maine.gov or 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333

For more information about the ARRA Public Building Wood-to-Energy Program, contact Mackenzi Keliher, Maine Department of Conservation, at 287-4909, or email: Mackenzi.keliher@maine.gov